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The Thematic Organization of the Panel Reliefs on the Arch of Galerius*

MARGRET S. POND ROTHMAN

Abstract

The thematic arrangement of the reliefs on two of the extant piers from the Arch of Galerius has eluded satisfactory analysis. Current interpretation is that the program consists of a chronicle of Galerius's campaign against the Persians on one pier and on a single face of the other, whose remaining faces bear a medley of triumphal images. It has not been realized that the imagery on the Arch of Galerius, just as on other triumphal monuments, is coordinated with its location on the Arch; it also reflects the location of the Arch in Galerius's palace complex. The bottom registers carry iconography typical of socles on other arches and lead the viewer into the interior of the Arch or toward the palace. Other panels on the facade are banal scenes which introduce the theme of a victory in the East. Scenes on the piers' inner faces are particularized and purposefully organized. On one pier episodes from the Persian campaign are to be read in descending sequences. However, on the pier closer to the palace the images follow a conceptual, rather than a chronological, development: the descending order moves from historical record to a paraphrase of history to a-historical imperial dogma. Such a hierarchical sequence of images acclaiming Galerius, placed alongside the narration of the events which made manifest his inalienable victoriousness, bears witness to the emergence of abstract and symbolic modes of thought.

The two relief-encrusted piers of the Arch of Galerius are impressive remnants of what was once an octopyle triumphal arch built around A.D. 300 as part of the Tetrarch Galerius's palace complex in Salonica (fig. 1). The sculptural decoration is familiar to students of Late Roman and early medieval history, art, and iconography; it is the most extensive sculptural record of the Tetrarchic era. Yet the iconographic content of this record and the principles which dictated the selection and arrangement of scenes on the piers are incompletely understood, despite the considerable attention both problems have attracted. According to the latest interpretation of the extant reliefs, the history of a Roman campaign against the Persians covers three of the four pier faces toward the interior of the Arch, and a medley of triumphal images fills all other pier faces.[1] But the iconographic program is not based on such a straightforward, mechanical division between documentary and symbolic modes of commemoration. To appreciate the complexity of the Galerian relief program one must consider both the iconographic tradition of Roman triumphal monuments and the Late Roman world's predilection for abstract thinking and conceptual analysis. Heretofore it has not been sufficiently recognized that the content of individual scenes is coordinated with their locations on the Arch and with the situation of the Arch in the palace complex. The iconographic arrangement drew passers-by into the Arch and directed them toward the adjacent palace. By using such a scheme the Arch of Galerius adheres to the conventions of Roman historiated monuments. The program's forward-looking character is to be seen in the organization of the symbolic scenes according to a hierarchy of abstraction; the Galerian arrangement of ceremonial imagery into a progression from historical fact to supra-mundane dogma heralds the development of medieval anagogical thinking.

The studies which have discussed the Arch of Galerius in detail have produced conflicting interpretations of the iconographic program. In his pioneering monograph published in 1890, the Danish archaeologist K.F. Kinch provided scrupulous descriptions and drawings of the reliefs, some parts

* This article reconsiders arguments presented in Chap. II of my unpublished dissertation, "The Arch of Galerius: A Sculptural Record of the Age of the Tetrarchies" (Margret S. Pond; University of Michigan, 1970). I am indebted to Prof. Ilene Forsyth for her constant encouragement and to Profs. Ernst Kitzinger and William Loerke, whose comments prompted the present study.

[1] H.P. Laubscher, *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki* (Berlin 1975) 103-106.

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FIG. 1. Arch of Galerius from southeast (in the 1920s) (photo: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg)

of which have since disappeared. Kinch believed that each of the four main piers of the Arch accurately documented a separate military campaign by Galerius,[2] although he admitted that the reliefs did not present a sequential narration of Tetrarchic history. His ingenious explanation was that the designers of the Arch struggled with conflicting desires to arrange scenes from the top downward on each pier face and to locate important scenes closer to the spectator: "Cédant à cette nécessité, on a souvent abandonné le principe, et les reliefs ont été jetes un peu pêle-mêle."[3] Relying upon Kinch's analysis of the program, C.C. Vermeule attempted to give a more systematic explanation of the selection and arrangement of scenes.[4] He believed that the guiding principle was not chronology, but the strategic location of individual reliefs on the monument; thus major scenes covered the facade toward the east (the lost piers) and the interior of the Arch. Although Vermeule is correct to emphasize that the program focusses on the interior and reflects the site, his interpretation is vitiated by the erroneous identifications of individual reliefs and by the dependence upon a hypothetical reconstruction of the lost piers.

Earlier, in a brief article H. von Schönebeck had corrected Kinch's assumption that each pier commemorated a different campaign.[5] Schönebeck rec-

[2] K.F. Kinch, *L'Arc de triomphe de Salonique* (Paris 1890) 10; 14. The author put Galerius's campaign against Narses in Armenia on the south pier, an encounter with Oriental foes in Adiabene on the north pier, and expeditions into Media and Adiabene on the lost piers.

[3] Kinch (supra n. 2) 12.

[4] C.C. Vermeule, *Roman Imperial Art in Greece and Asia Minor* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968) 336-50.

[5] H. von Schönebeck, "Die zyklische Ordnung der Triumphalreliefs am Galeriusbogen in Saloniki," *BZ* 37 (1937) 361-71. The article was a preliminary statement of findings by a team from the German Archaeological Institute, which had completely restudied the monument. With the deaths of Schönebeck and another member of the team in WW II, the complete

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ognized that the panels on both piers dealt only with Galerius's campaign against the Persian monarch Narses. Also, he made the critical observation that the reliefs were divided into a battle documentary and a ceremonial and symbolic paraphrase of the events. His interpretation forms the basis of subsequent literature which briefly mentions the Arch. A characteristic description compares a trio of the ceremonial scenes (an *adventus/triumphus/maiestas*) with career sarcophagi: ". . . the connections and historical justifications have been segregated to the reliefs on the other piers of the Arch so that the synoptic message of the Galerian program is visually isolated and thereby removed from the nexus of contemporary history."[6] In his recent monograph, H.P. Laubscher revised several of Schönebeck's identifications for individual scenes, but only slightly modified his predecessor's interpretation of the iconographic arrangement.[7]

I shall preface a new explanation of the relief ensemble with a review of what is known about the architectural monument itself and its relationship to Galerius's palace complex.[8] The core of the Arch is a tetrapylon formed by relief-covered piers supporting a great dome. Before the tetrapylon was completed, it was expanded laterally into an octopylon through the addition of piers for secondary passageways vaulted by cupolas. The unusual shape was an adaptation to the palace quarters which developed around the monument. The Arch marked the intersection of a major public road, flanked by colonnaded walkways, with an avenue leading from Galerius's palace to the rotunda that was probably intended to serve as Galerius's mausoleum. Various elements bound the Arch to the architectural environment and obscured the lateral spread of the monument: a stepped vestibule was attached to the short facade on the palace side of the Arch, and the colonnades lining the main road were joined to the major facades in such fashion that they obscured the subsidiary passageways.

The surviving elements of the monument are two of the major piers, covered with reliefs, and a third pier from the same facade of the Arch. The remaining superstructure reveals the existence of vaulting and additional decoration. Inset rondels and niches centered over the main piers indicate that the facade originally displayed sculpture at the upper level; perhaps effigies of the Tetrarchs, or their patron deities, appeared here.[9] There is now no evidence for an attic, inscription, or crowning sculptural ensemble.

No matter what sculpture or inscription has disappeared, though, a major focus of meaningful decoration has survived in the pier reliefs. The panels entirely filled the surfaces of the Arch closest to the observer who approached along the main road or stood under the central dome. Even today the density and variety of the reliefs are striking; the Roman viewer who stood within the Arch would have been assailed by crowded sculptural scenes wherever he turned. The panels mask the piers to impost level and are separated only by bulging foliate moldings.[10] The reliefs so teem with incident, the figures so crowd the panels, and the carving style is so heterogeneous that the impression made by the panels is one of confusing complexity.[11] The problem of visual comprehension is magnified for the observer today. Badly worn relief surfaces and losses render some panels indecipherable, especially on the north pier. Other panels can be read, but their specific content is unclear because there is only scanty literary documentation of the events which the panels record.

The scenes depicting a Roman military campaign against the Persians indicate that the Arch of Galerius memorializes a victory on the Eastern frontier during the Tetrarchic era. The reliefs are a

publication of the Arch was abandoned. In the 1960s H.P. Laubscher resumed the study of the reliefs, utilizing the fragmentary manuscript and the photographs produced in the 1930s (see Laubscher [supra n. 1] 1-3).

[6] R. Brilliant, "Temporal Aspects in Late Roman Art," *L'Arte* 10 (1970) 78.

[7] Laubscher (supra n. 1) 25-92; 95-106.

[8] Laubscher (supra n. 1) 18-22 and pl. 1.

[9] Such sculptural programs appeared, for example, on the facade of Diocletian's palace at Split and on the Vicennalia monument in the Forum Romanum. See H. Kähler, *Das Funfsaulendenkmal für die Tetrarchen auf dem Forum Romanum* (Cologne 1964) 6f.

[10] The unique use of panels to cover the piers entirely has often been described as a successful integration of the decorative traditions of triumphal arches and the historiated columns; for example, see R. Bianchi-Bandinelli, *Rome: The Late Empire* (New York 1971) 305f. The panels also bring to mind the rich production of sarcophagi in Greece.

[11] However, each panel presents a single action, observed from a single vantage point; the panel format echoes the rectilinearity of the piers; and the scenes are organized architectonically through the use of closed compositions and emphasis upon horizontals, verticals, and diagonals.

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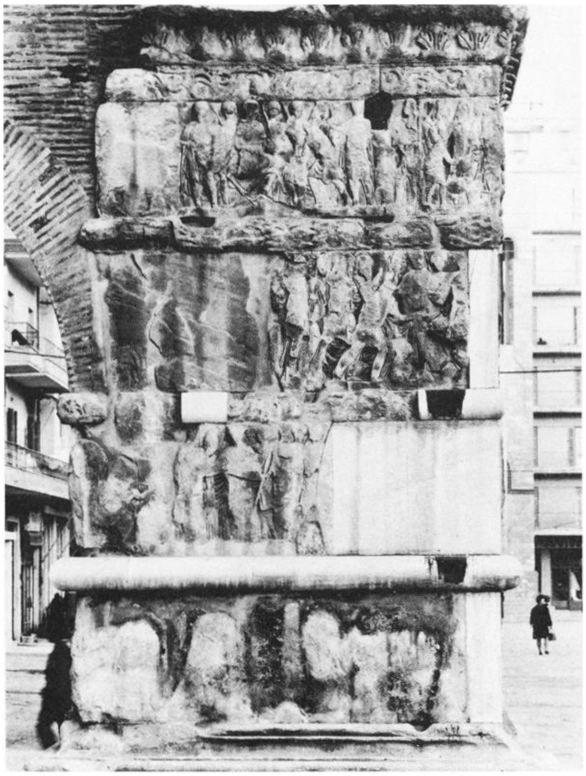

4.

Fig. 2. North pier, east face (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

Fig. 3. North pier, south face (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

Fig. 4. North pier, west face (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

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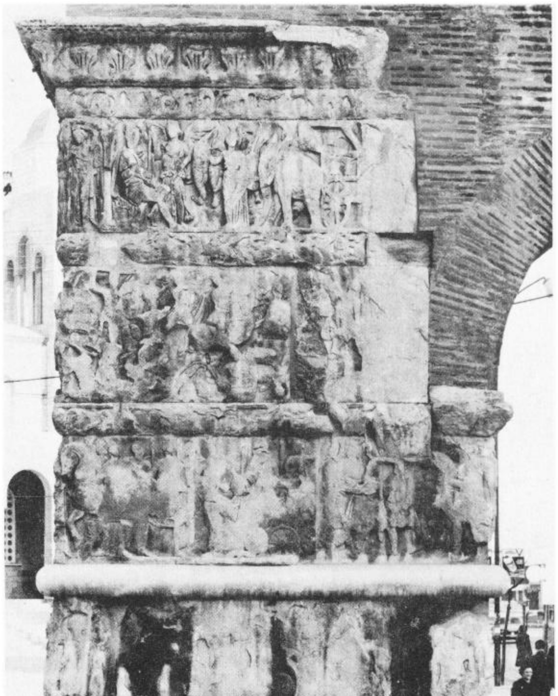

7.

FIG. 5. South pier, east face (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

FIG. 6. South pier, north face (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

FIG. 7. South pier, west face (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

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sculptural document of Galerius's most notable achievement, a high point in the military history of the Late Roman empire. Only the outlines of the course of events are known from written sources.[12] A war erupted in A.D. 297 when the recently elevated Persian monarch, Narses, tried to affirm his legitimacy by winning back from the Romans the lands which they had taken from Vahram II. Diocletian called Galerius from Illyricum to check the Persian offensive. Details about the Tetrarch's first encounter with the Persians are unknown, but its result was a defeat for the Roman forces. In a second campaign in A.D. 297 the Romans and their Armenian allies inflicted a stunning defeat upon the enemy, and the victors captured Narses's harem as well as an enormous amount of booty. So great was the impression made by the victories upon later Roman historians that writers, applying a panegyrical convention, picture Galerius as another Alexander the Great; they claim that he advanced across the entire Persian realm (Eutropius) or even marched as far as the frontiers of India (Malalas, Theophanes, and Zonaras).[13] The Tetrarch's phenomenal success and zeal for conquest were so great that it may have taken a threat of forceful action to make Galerius concede to the peace terms Diocletian considered suitable.[14] Subsequently, the victorious Romans returned to Antioch to enjoy a triumphal reception arranged by Diocletian.

To study the reliefs on the Arch of Galerius for their historical content alone would be a frustrating task, because an unfortunate symmetry results from the damaged state of the reliefs: the panels on the north pier, which most explicitly record the course of events, are the most severely abraded, whereas many of the panels on the south pier, which are less documentary, are remarkably well preserved. To identify the subject of any panel today, one must turn to Laubscher's meticulous descriptions, which are based on photographs taken in the 1930s. The following discussion of the individual panels summarizes Laubscher's identifications and utilizes his system of notation for the panels' locations. The arrangement of the numbered panels on the piers is explained by ill. 1. (For the sake of simplicity I shall call the northeast pier the "north pier," the southwest pier the "south pier," the northwest face the "west facade," etc.)

North pier, east face (*A.I*), fig. 2.

1. Roman Cavalry Charge (fig. 8). Led by the heroic figure of Galerius, Roman troops charge from the gateway of an Oriental city at the left to rout a cluster of Persian cavalry galloping to the right.

2. Capture of the Persian Harem (fig. 9). A group of Oriental men and women huddle at the center as they ward off attacks from both sides by Roman cavalry. The scene is full of drama: among the four fallen Orientals at the left, one plunges his dagger into his neck; at the right three others collapse, one tumbling headlong; and in the central group men in the foreground fight off the Romans to protect the despairing women and elderly men behind them. The inclusion of Galerius as the leader of the Romans and the Persian queen Arsane as an enthroned figure at the center of the scene identifies the incident as the capture of the harem.

3. Pursuit of the Persians over the River Tigris (fig. 10). The badly-worn relief shows Roman cavalry pursuing three Persian infantrymen to the left, across the personification of the Tigris in the lower left corner, who is signified by the inscription ΠΟΤΑΜΟϹ ΤΙΓΡΙϹ.

4. Parade of Animals (?) (fig. 2). All that remains is the figure of a classically garbed figure, perhaps a Victoria, swiftly leading a horse to the left.

North pier, south face (*A.II*) fig. 3.

5. The Last Battle (fig. 11). Only the general content of the scene can be understood, due to the wear, the loss of any inscriptions, and the absence of a detailed history of the Persian campaign. Roman cavalrymen gallop behind their leader, whose steed tramples a heap of eight or nine fallen Persians. The assault is opposed by a small group of equestrian and foot soldiers, who wear a battle dress which occurs nowhere else in the extant re-

[12] The accounts in Lactantius's *De Mortibus Persecutorum* and Eusebius's *Historia Ecclesiastica* are vividly biased. Brief mentions in later abbreviated histories are cited by E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, ed. J.-R. Palanque (Paris 1959) I, 448. For detailed histories of the Tetrarchic period, see Stein, and especially W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la Tétrarchie* (*BEFAR* 162; Paris 1946).

[13] Seston (supra n. 12) 171, n. 10; 172, n. 1.

[14] Seston (supra n. 12) 172, n. 3.

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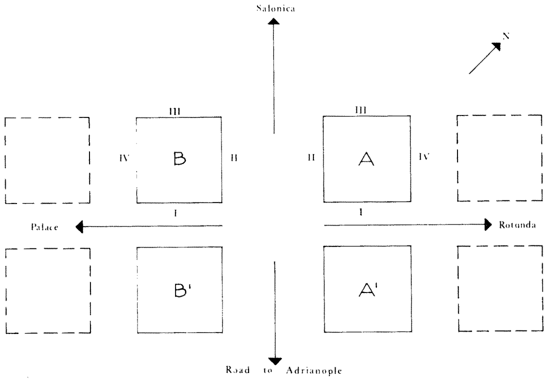

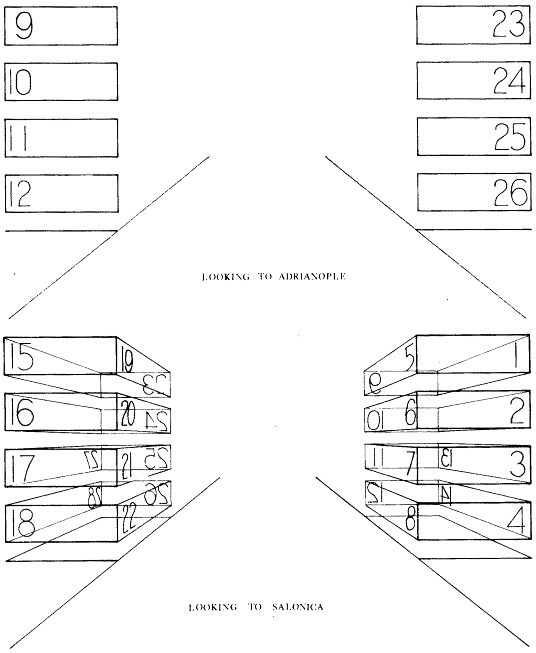

Pier A

I. 1. Roman Cavalry Charge
2. Capture of the Persian Harem
3. Pursuit of the Persians over the River Tigris
4. Parade of Animals (?)

II. 5. The Last Battle
6. Barbarian Migration and Submission
7. Adventus of a Roman Emperor
8. Parade of Animals (?)

III. 9. Clementia Augusti
10. Clementia Augusti
11. Personifications of Persian Cities
12. Parade of Animals (?)

IV. 13. Parade of Animals
14. Parade of Animals (?)

Pier B

I. 15. Adlocutio
16. Galerius' Reception of a Persian Delegation
17. Sacrifice by Galerius and Diocletian
18. Cortege of Gift-bearing Persians

II. 19. Adventus
20. Combat between Galerius and Narses
21. Emperors Enthroned
22. Victorias

III. 23. Victoria Orientis
24. Virtus Augusti
25. Pompa triumphalis
26. Roma and Victorias

IV. 27. Victorias holding a Vota Shield
28. Parade of Animals

Ill. 1. Diagram of surviving panels and their content (drawing: Michael Antonsen and Xenia Urban)

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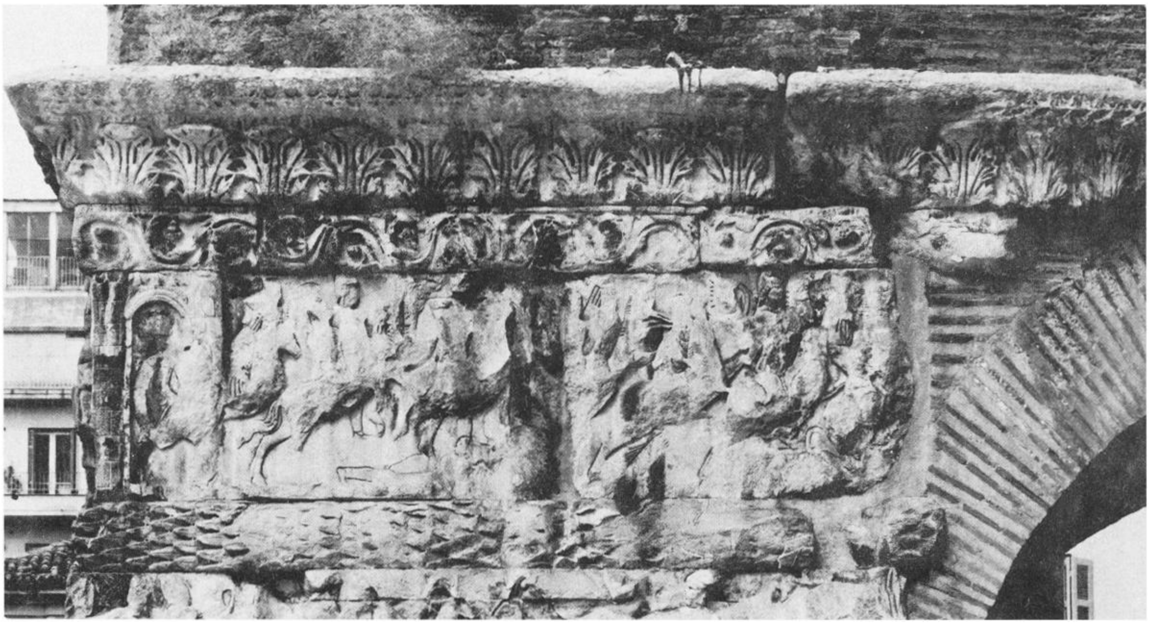

FIG. 8. Roman Cavalry Charge (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

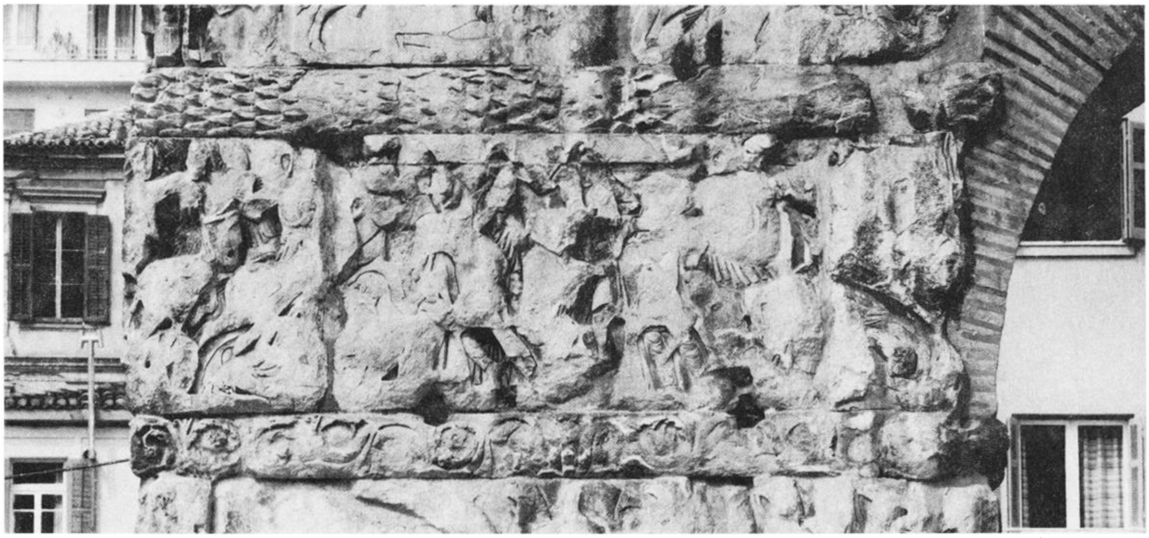

FIG. 9. Capture of the Persian Harem (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

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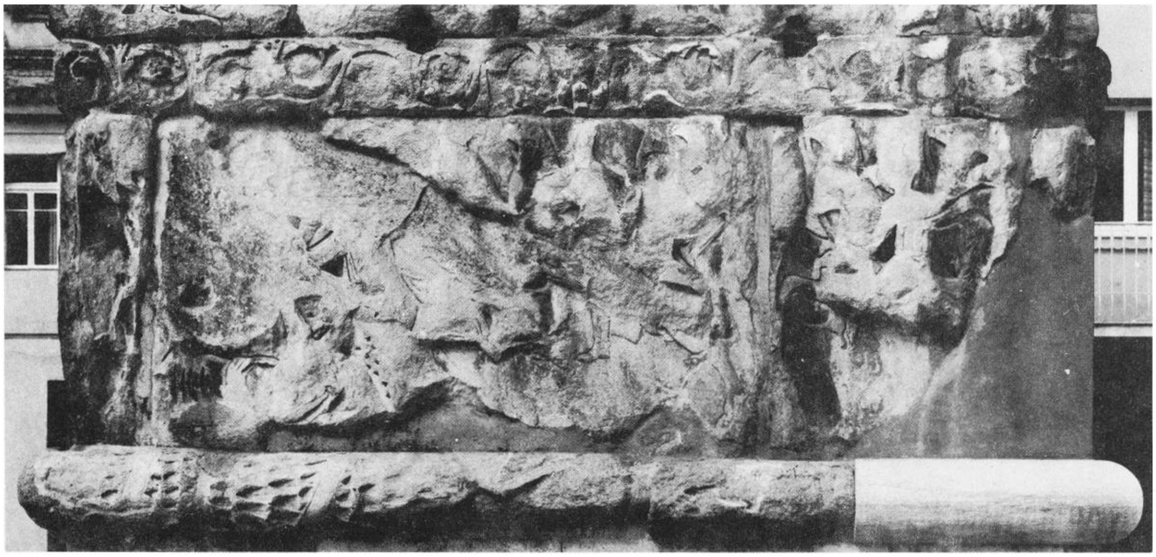

FIG. 10. Pursuit of the Persians over the River Tigris (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

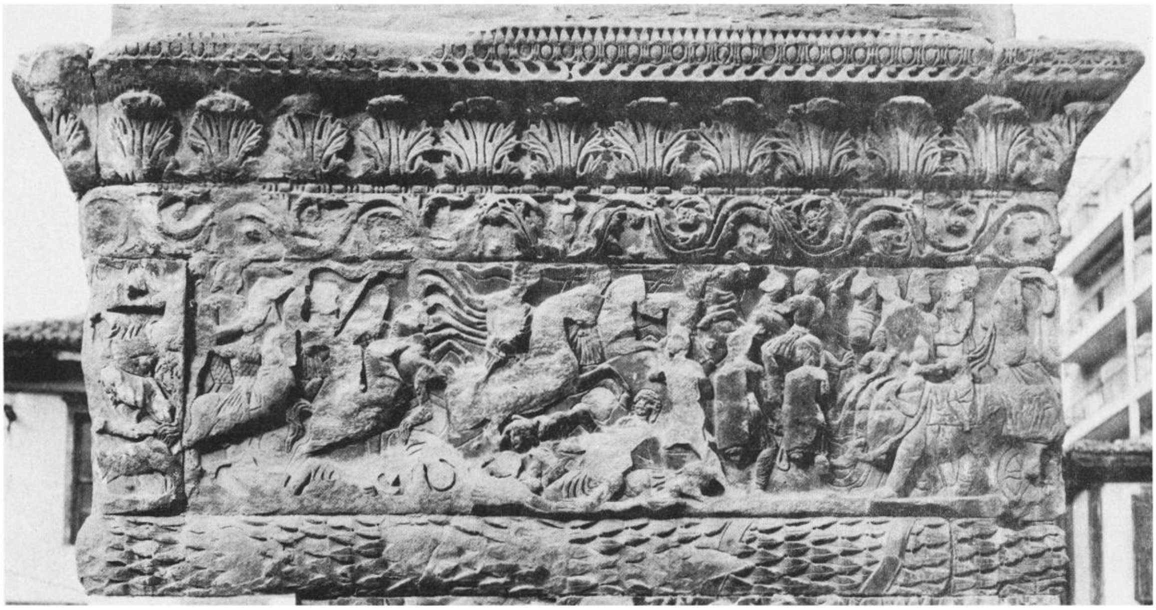

FIG. 11. The Last Battle (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

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liefs. To the right appear several Persians and a female personification who enters the scene in an elephant quadriga. The location of the battle is given by the river personification in a rocky landscape at the left border of the panel. None of the various interpretations of the scene is fully satisfactory. Kinch called this the battle of the Romans against the Kurds, but he was too quick to assume that a mountainous area must be Kurdistan; Schönebeck identified the scene as the last battle of the Romans against the Persians and interpreted the figure in the quadriga as Victoria.[15] However, Laubscher has shown that some of the enemy are not Persians and that the personification is not winged. His identification of the scene as a combat between the Romans and the Persians, who are joined by Kurdish or Armenian allies and reinforced by a personification of Persia, is scarcely more satisfactory.[16] The major flaw is his belief that the personification supports the enemy. First, there is no certainty that the figure is Persia, because she rides in a Roman wagon decorated with a relief of three nude men of uncertain identification. Second, the aggrandizement of Galerius's foes would violate the program's overriding theme of imperial glorification: all deities and personifications should support the Tetrarch. Galerius's prowess on the battlefield is so emphasized that both the Roman and enemy forces become accessories to the central image of the heroically-scaled emperor riding over the mound of the fallen. Since the medallion which commemorates Galerius's victory over the Persians bears a simplified version of the same motif, with the emperor riding against a Persian man, woman, and child as he crushes two prostrate figures,[17] it is acceptable to interpret the scene as the final, decisive battle of the campaign. Originally the panel informed the observer where the event occurred; now one sees only the overwhelming superiority of the emperor and his forces, underscored by the entry of the triumphal quadriga.

6. Barbarian Migration and Submission (fig. 12). At the far left stood the emperor, forcing into submission a Persian elder, while other captives are urged forward into the victor's presence by Roman soldiers. The right side of the panel is filled

FIG. 12. Barbarian Migration and Submission (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

[15] Kinch (supra n. 2) 42f; Schönebeck (supra n. 5) 364.

[16] Laubscher (supra n. 1) 31-34.

[17] The legend is VICTORIA PERSICA. P. Garrucci ("Brass Medallion Representing the Persian Victory of Maximianus Galerius," trans. W. Wylie, *NC* 10 [1870] 112-18) believed that the medallion referred specifically to the capture of the Persian harem, since it diverged from standard iconography by showing the enemy unarmed; however, the image can be interpreted simply as an emphasis on effortless victory.

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by a procession of captives, including women riding dromedaries, who pass in front of the same motif of a crenellated city gate which appears on the panel of the Roman Cavalry Charge. Since the particular city-gate type occurs only in these two panels, the sculptors may be referring to the same location.

7. *Adventus* of a Roman Emperor (fig. 13). Followed by his bodyguard, the emperor rides in a *cathedra*-like vehicle toward a row of long-robed figures who raise their right arms in acclamation. Enough remains of the abraded relief to suggest that the emperor is met by a city personification, who offers a Victoria to him. Since there was a reclining river personification in the lower left corner of the panel, presumably identified by an inscription, the Roman observer would know where the *adventus* occurred. Schönebeck had suggested that the event was Diocletian's entry into Nisibis,[18] but it is more likely that Galerius figured here.

8. Parade of Animals (?). Nothing remains on the bottom register, but Kinch reported seeing on it three ungulates, perhaps zebus, led by men carrying pikes over their shoulders.[19]

North pier, west face (*A.III*) fig. 4.

9. *Clementia Augusti* (fig. 14).

10. *Clementia Augusti* (fig. 15). The two formulaic scenes of suppliant barbarians led toward a seated Roman are virtually mirror images. The only convincing explanation of the anomalous duplication is that the scenes glorify both Diocletian and Galerius.

11. Personifications of Persian Cities (fig. 16). The single remaining slab is carved with two rows of standing figures, none of whom is accentuated as if he were the emperor. However, the isocephalism, the classical robes, and the presence of a figure holding a cornucopia do very loosely suggest the imagery of the Cancelleria reliefs.[20] Perhaps the Galerian panel derives from such ceremonial iconography of a ruler accompanied by personifications. Since the emperor appears on every other panel, with the exception of the ones on the lowest registers, he must have figured here as well.

12. Parade of Animals (?). The hoof of an animal at the left end of the panel, visible in the early photographs, indicates that the scene was another procession of animals and their guides.

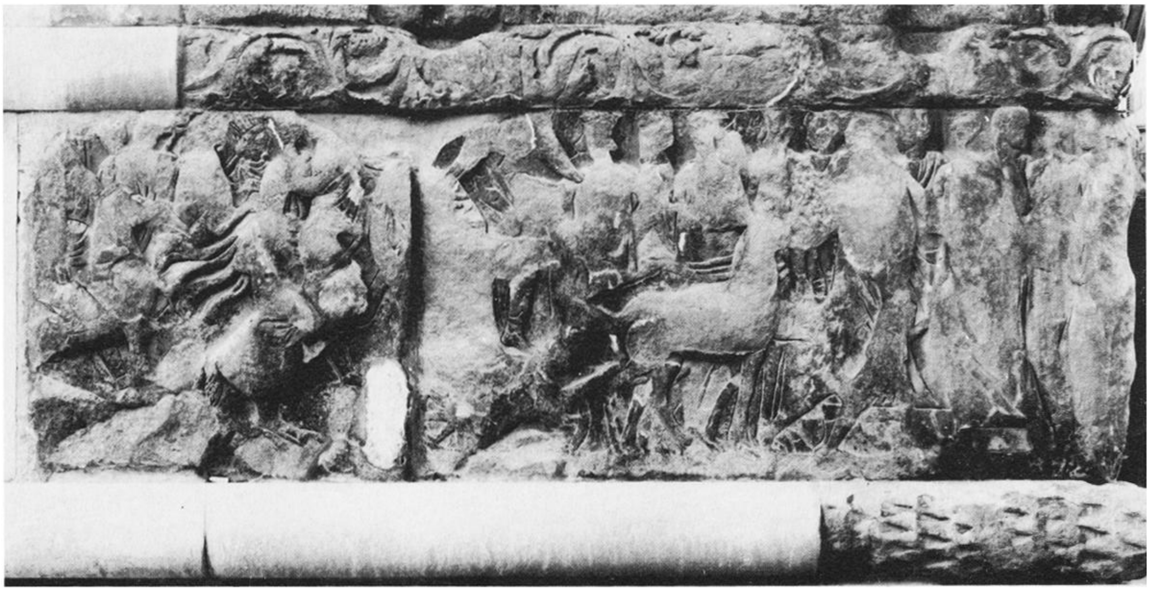

FIG. 13. *Adventus* of a Roman Emperor (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

[18] Schönebeck (supra n. 5) 362.
[19] Kinch (supra n. 2) 45.
[20] R. Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art* (New Haven 1963) fig. 2.117.

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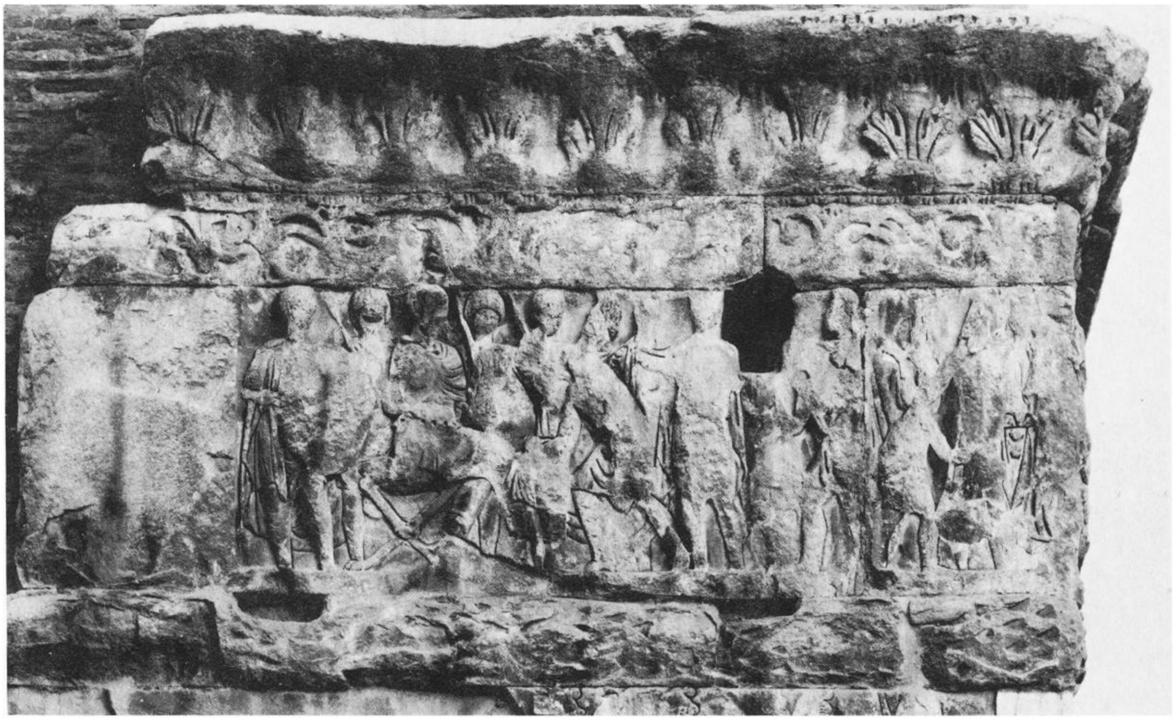

FIG. 14. *Clementia Augusti* (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

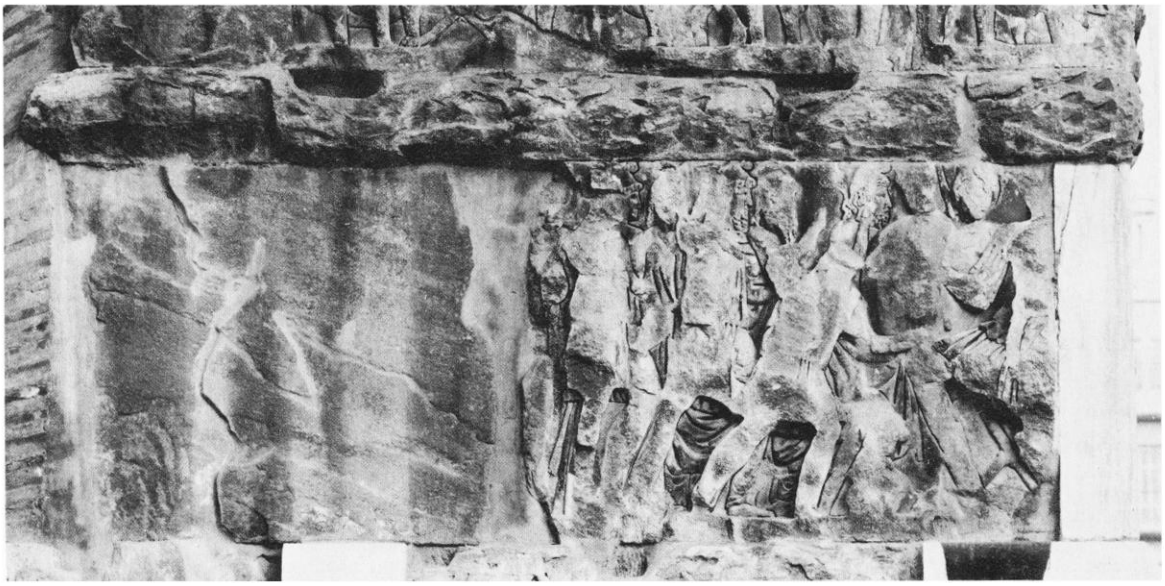

FIG. 15. *Clementia Augusti* (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

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Fig. 16. Personifications of Persian Cities (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

North pier, north face (A.IV).

13. Parade of Animals (fig. 17). Three Roman soldiers lead dromedaries laden with sacks.

14. Parade of Animals (?). All that remained in the 1930s was the dim outline of an animal (an ox?) in profile.

South pier, east face (B.I) fig. 5.

15. *Adlocutio* (fig. 18). The *adlocutio* was a staple of imperial ceremonial life; the sculptors here indicated a specific enactment by adding a place personification in mountainous terrain to the left of the scene.[21] The panel is bracketed on the opposite end by a Victoria-Felicitas in a conch-shell niche.[22] Kinch used the evidence of the place personification and the Dacian military costume to interpret the scene as Galerius calling together his Dacian compatriots near Serdica for the campaign against the Persians.[23] However, it is more likely that the scene is the Tetrarch's address of praise to his troops after the victory. Such an identification places the scene in the iconographic tradition of the narratives on the Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius and the Arch of Septimius Severus, which regularly present a sequence of invasion/battle/*adlocutio*.[24]

16. Galerius's Reception of a Persian Delegation (fig. 19). The panel records Galerius's meeting with Apharban, Narses's emissary, about terms for the release of the Persian monarch's harem. The

[21] The half-draped female figure holds an ivy-leaf fan. Undoubtedly the attribute designates the location of the event; the same fan is held by a figure identified as Cilicia, on an Antioch mosaic, and by a figure who may represent a site in Caria, on the frieze of the Hekateion in Lagina (see Laubscher [supra n. 1] 47, n. 216).

[22] For related images of Victoria-Felicitas, see G.Ch. Picard, "Le Monument aux Victoires de Carthage et l'expedition orientale de Lucius Verus," *Karthago* 1 (1950) 86-88.

[23] Kinch (supra n. 2) 17f.

[24] R. Brilliant, *The Arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum* (*MAAR* 29; Rome 1967) 77.

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FIG. 17. Parade of Animals (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

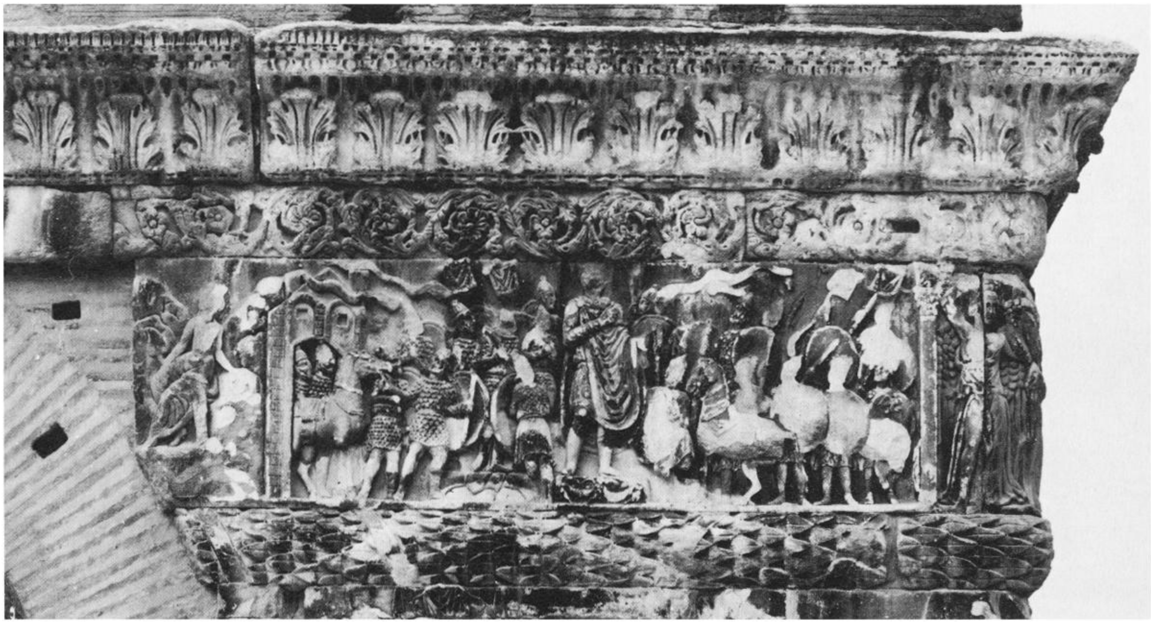

FIG. 18. *Adlocutio* (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

static composition is so arranged that Galerius and Roma flank the kneeling suppliants. Galerius is surrounded by his bodyguard, and Roma precedes four figures who may represent major cities of the Roman empire. The small figure huddled in the right corner of the panel is probably *Persia devicta*.[25]

17. Sacrifice by Galerius and Diocletian (fig. 20). Galerius and Diocletian meet in front of an audience composed of Aion, Oikoumene, Omonoia

[25] Laubscher (supra n. 1) 51f. A male figure in the costume of a deity or personification stands behind the last of the kneeling Persians.

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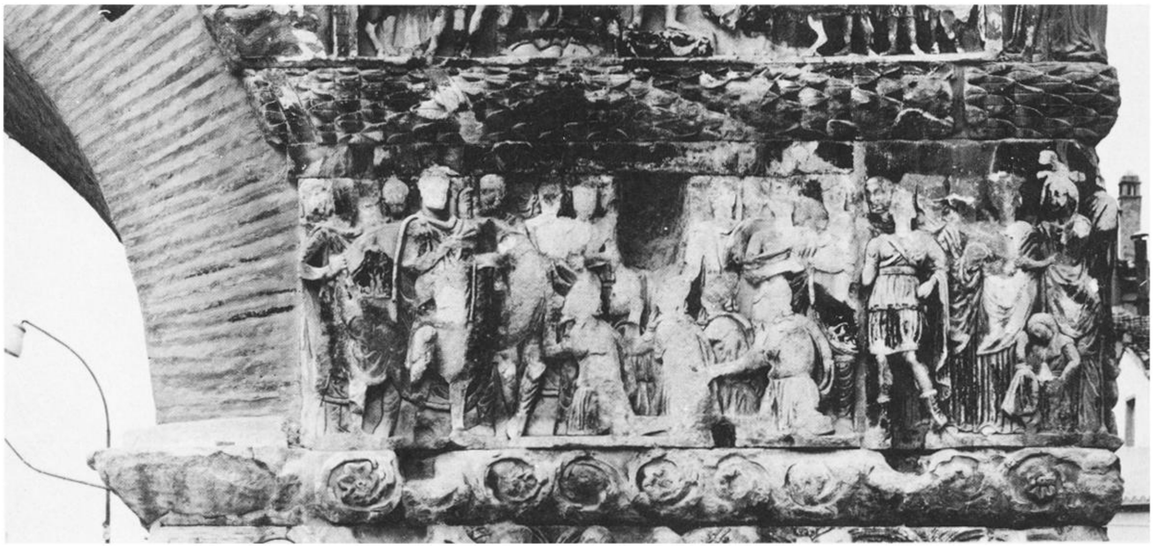

FIG. 19. Galerius's Reception of a Persian Delegation (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

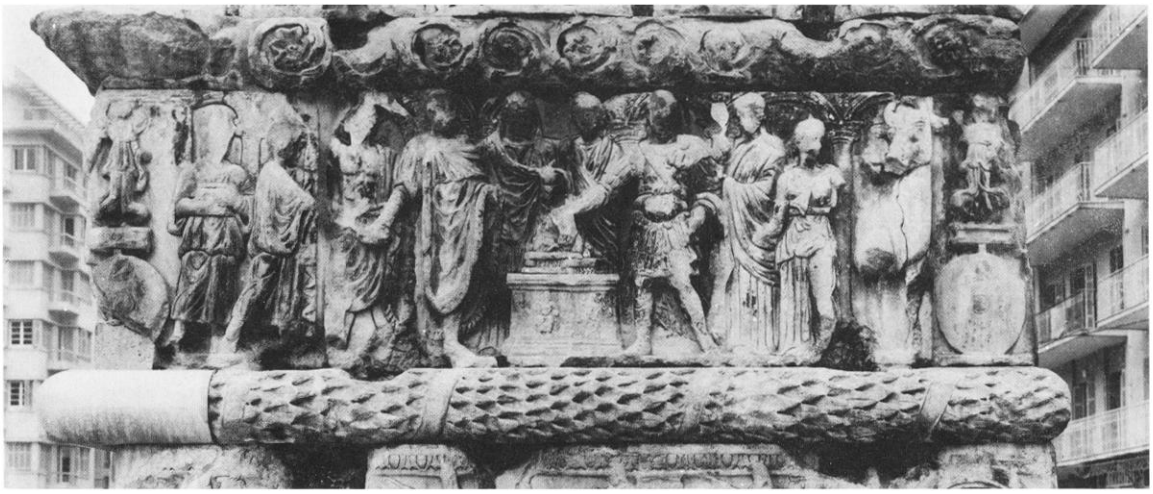

FIG. 20. Sacrifice by Galerius and Diocletian (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

(?), Eirene, and attendants to the sacrifice;[26] behind them spreads an arcuated facade. The symbolic and ceremonial aspects of the scene so dominate the historical content that there has been uncertainty about whether the sacrifice occurs when the two emperors meet in Antioch before Galerius sets out on the campaign, or at a reunion at the conclusion of the war. Kinch thought the ceremony took place at Antioch because he considered the arcaded backdrop to be a reference to Diocletian's palace.[27] In her study I. Ryberg had interpreted the panel as a *nuncupatio votorum* made by Galerius to Diocletian, rather than to Jupiter.[28] However, Laubscher correctly stresses that the personifi-

[26] The inscriptions OΥMEN and IPHN can still be seen over the two women; Laubscher (supra n. 1) 55f correctly identifies the figure standing to Diocletian's right as Aion, rather than as Jupiter.

[27] Kinch (supra n. 2) 30.

[28] I. Ryberg, *Rites of the Roman State Religion* (*MAAR* 22; Rome 1955) 139f.

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cations Omonoia, Oikoumene, and Eirene are more appropriate as witnesses to a sacrifice of thanksgiving; he accepts the traditional interpretation as a ceremony occurring when the two emperors celebrated the victory in Antioch.[29] Although such a location suits what is known through historical accounts, the arcaded setting need not refer to a specific site. The arcade is typical not only of Late Roman architecture, but also of contemporary images of sacrifice. A closely related image appears on a gold medallion of Constantius Chlorus, which commemorates the elevation of Constantius Chlorus and Galerius to the rank of Augusti.[30]

18. Cortege of Gift-bearing Persians (fig. 21). The Romans in Salonica could have witnessed just such parades. The elephants driven by mahouts, the wildcats (lionesses?), and the vases and richly embroidered stuffs that the Persians carry in procession are part of the wealth which Galerius's triumph brought to the empire.

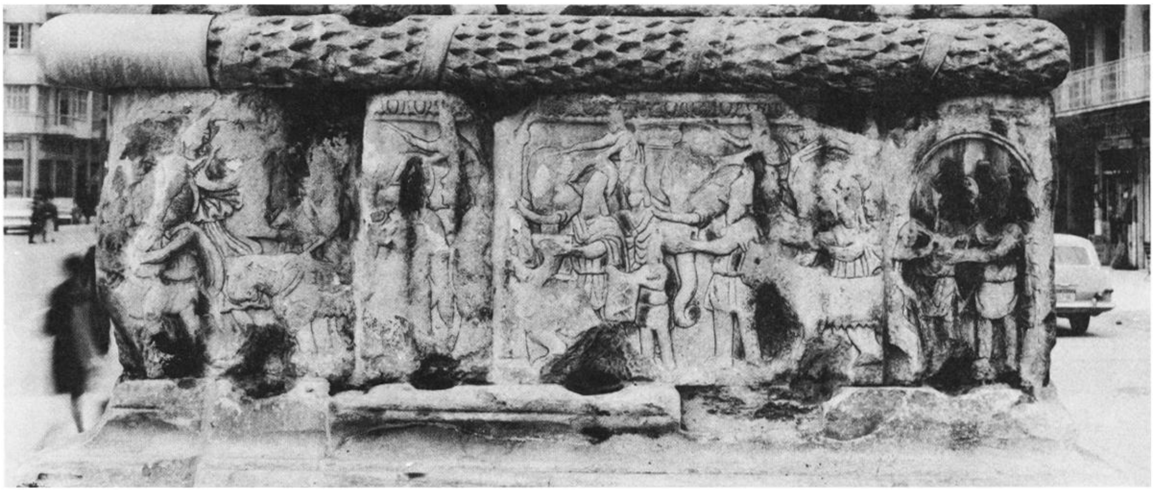

FIG. 21. Cortege of Gift-bearing Persians (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

South pier, north face (*B.II*) fig. 6.

19. *Adventus* (fig. 22). Like the *Adlocutio*, the *adventus* panel specifies a particular celebration of the frequent imperial rite. The scene contradicts the general development of *adventus* iconography in Late Roman art in that it replaces the typical condensed symbols which emphasize the aspect of an epiphany with a profusion of details: the city of departure, the Tetrarch with his equestrian bodyguard, and the individualized crowd carrying tapers and bouquets, marshalled in front of a city gate. The deity standing in a temple, above the city, indicates the locale for the ceremony. Kinch thought that the motif depicted Anaitis in a temple located in the Armenian city of Eriza, but Laubscher has suggested that the temple is dedicated to Sol.[31] However, the internal evidence is not sufficient to confirm either identification. Enframing the scene are identical images of Victoria-Felicitas in conch-shell niches.

20. Combat between Galerius and Narses (fig. 23). The panel relies on the compositional formulas and motifs common to battle sarcophagi to characterize the entire Persian campaign. Although the two rulers did not in fact meet on the battlefield, they are shown here locked in combat at the center of the battle melée. Galerius is supremely confident as he thrusts his spear at Narses, who struggles to avoid the attack and to control his rearing mount.[32]

[29] Laubscher (supra n. 1) 57.

[30] J.M.C. Toynbee, *Roman Medallions* (*ANSNS* 5; New York 1944) pl. VIII, 8.

[31] Kinch (supra n. 2) 21f; Laubscher (supra n. 1) 64.

[32] Laubscher (supra n. 1) 69 has challenged the identification of the three prominent Roman infantrymen who dominate the foreground as Licinius, Maximianus Herculius, and Constantine, made by A. Calo Levi (*Barbarians on Roman Imperial*

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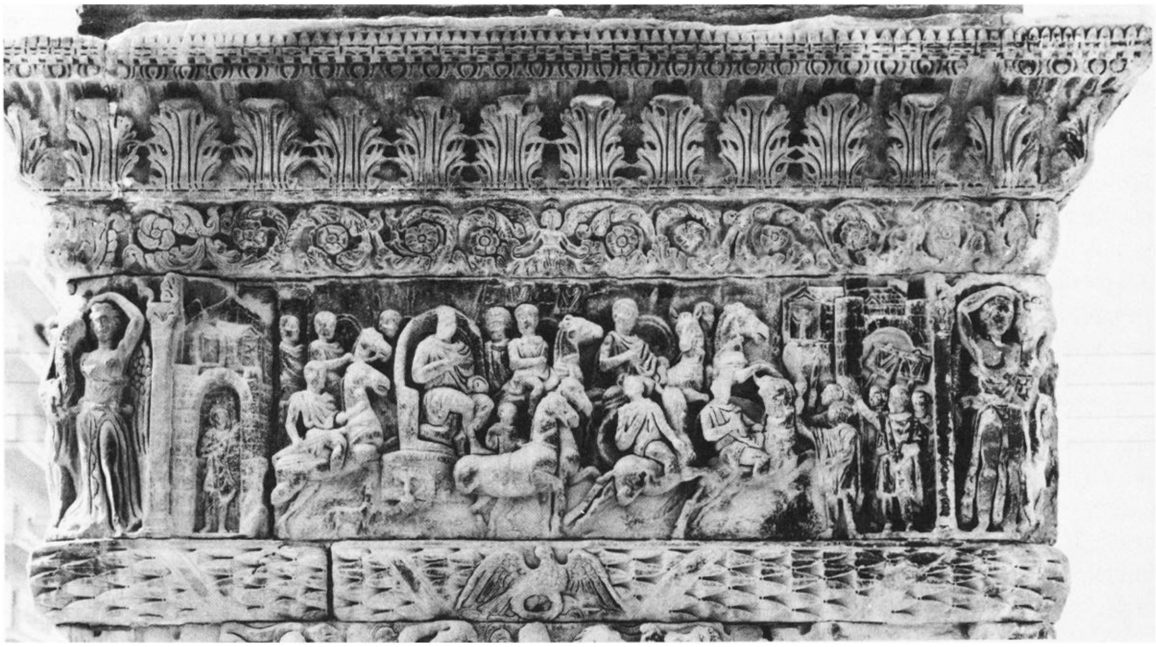

FIG. 22. *Adventus* (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

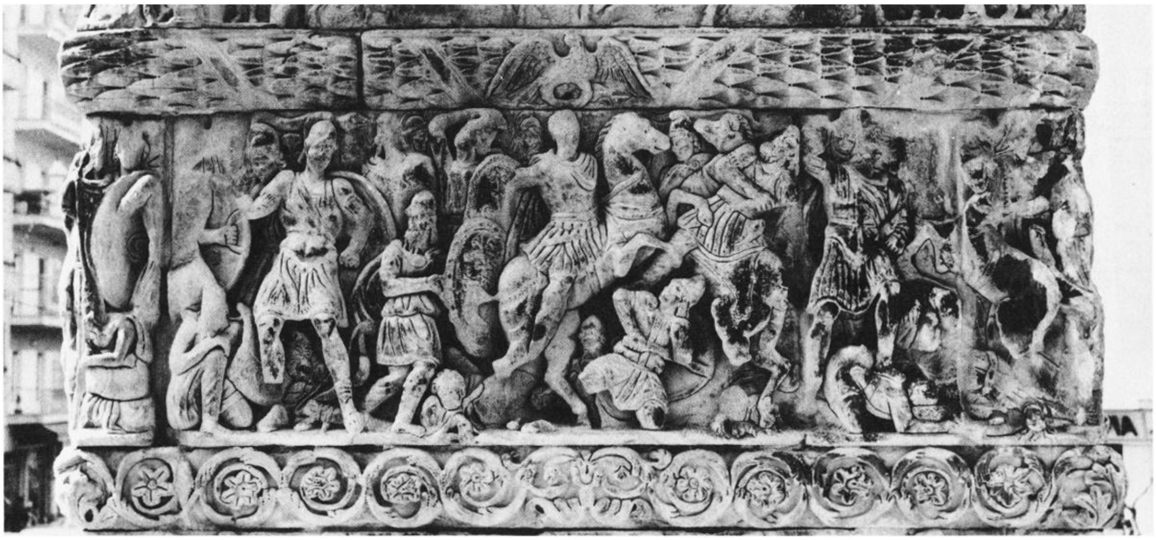

FIG. 23. Combat between Galerius and Narses (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

Coins and Sculpture [*ANSNNM* 123; New York 1952] 32). I believe that the figures are presented to fill compositional, not narrative, functions. When one considers the rearing horse at the right edge of the panel as the counterpart to the Roman striding in at the left, the role of the three soldiers plus horse as symmetrical points of accent in the composition becomes apparent. Schönebeck (supra n. 5) 369-71 had discussed the use of traditional motifs of triumph for the poses of the major figures. His observations about the abstract nature of the panel can be supplemented: parallels to the fallen Persians appear on sarcophagi with Amazonomachies (R. Redlich, *Die Amazonensarkophage des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* [Berlin 1942] pl. 3, no. 80; pl. 2); and the overall composition is used, for example, on the Achilles and Penthesilea sarcophagus in the Vatican (P.G. Hamberg, *Studies in Roman Imperial Art* [Copenhagen 1945] pl. 43).

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21. Emperors Enthroned (fig. 24). The panel is a grandiose, studied proclamation of the earthly and celestial reach of the Tetrarchs' empire.[33] Diocletian (on the left) and Maximianus are enthroned between their junior regents, Constantius Chlorus (on the left) and Galerius; the four emperors join in raising up the kneeling personifications of Syria and Britain. The ceremony is witnessed by Isis, Virtus, a Dioscouros, Serapis, Jupiter, a Dioscouros, Honos, and Fortuna (from left to right). The remaining figures of Oceanus and Tellus, at the sides, and Coelus and a female counterpart (Orbis Terrarum?), beneath the feet of the Augusti, constitute a formula of cosmic extent which appears in pagan and Mithraic art as well.

22. Victorias (fig. 24). Standing within an ornate arcade, seven Victorias turn to their right and hold out offerings in the form of statuettes, which vary in sex, costume, and pose.[34] Perhaps they represent the seven planetary deities; such iconography would suit Galerius's Mithraic interests and expand the content of the imperial apotheosis in the panel above by suggesting the infinite duration of the Tetrarchic government.[35] The Victorias, embodiments of the Tetrarchs' invincibility, would be the appropriate bearers of the gifts of eternity.

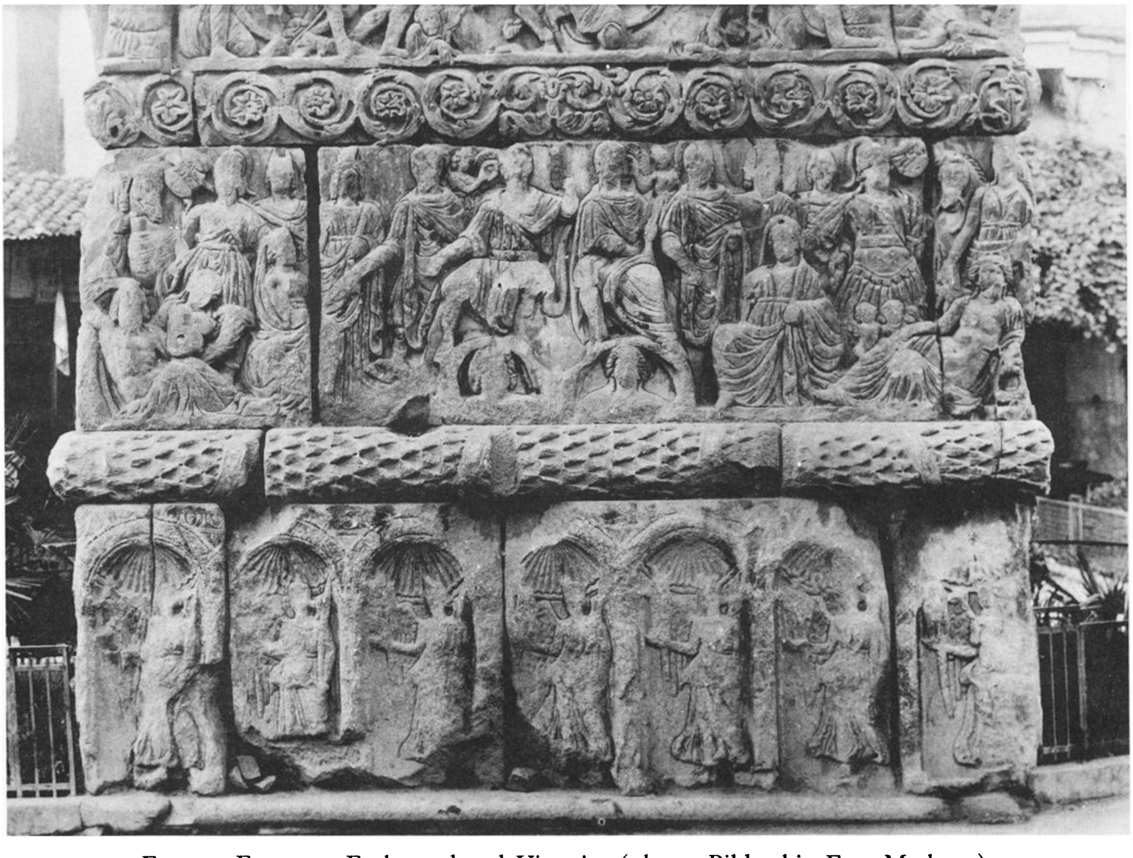

FIG. 24. Emperors Enthroned and Victorias (photo: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg)

[33] See M. Pond Rothman, "The Panel of the Emperors Enthroned on the Arch of Galerius," *Byzantine Studies/Etudes Byzantines* 2:1 (1975) 19-40 and Laubscher (supra n. 1) 69-78. Laubscher is correct to observe that the Augusti are flanked by the Caesars of their colleagues, rather than by their own subordinates.

[34] The statuette at the left has a flaring outline which suggests a female figure in a wind-whipped skirt; the central statuette has the closed contour of an erect frontal figure; the next one to the right is a man who stands with feet apart, turns to the left, and raises his right hand to grasp something; and the male statuette at the far right, the most visible, shows bare legs and a cloak that falls over the figure's left side. Laubscher (supra n. 1) 79f reviews the possible identifications for these statuettes.

[35] Since the gods of the planets and days are represented in varying sequences, the pattern of sex in the statuettes is uninformative (Boll, "Hebdomas," *RE* 7 [1912] 2576). For a discussion of the influence of Mithraism on the panel of the Emperors Enthroned, see Pond Rothman (supra n. 33) 26f.

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South pier, west face (*B.III*) fig. 7.

23. *Victoria Orientis* (fig. 25). The scene is a pastiche of conventional symbols of victory. At the left corner stands a Victoria-Felicitas, who duplicates the figures terminating the *Adlocutio* panel and bracketing the relief of the *Adventus*. Next to her Galerius is posed according to the formula for imperial glorification in which the emperor is crowned by a Victoria as he holds out the orb of universal dominion.[36] The panel is closed at the right by the motif of Valor leading an elephant-drawn *carpentum*, the triumphal wagon for an Eastern victory.

24. *Virtus Augusti* (fig. 26). The relief surface is so badly abraded that we can recognize little more than the generic subject. Roman infantrymen dominate the top of the panel, and stricken Persians occupy the lower part; the composition is standard for scenes of pitched battle in Roman martial iconography.[37] At the center is a triumphal image of Galerius on horseback, trampling a fallen Persian and honored by an eagle hovering overhead. The motif echoes the depiction of the victorious emperor on the panel of the Combat between Galerius and Narses, and it occurs frequently in third- and fourth-century numismatics, where it is linked with the legend VIRTVS AVGVSTI.[38] There is nothing visible on the relief to suggest that the Galerian sculptors infused specific content into the triumphal iconography of this panel.

25. *Pompa triumphalis* (fig. 27). Roman soldiers accompany a procession of kneeling beasts yoked to a wagon laden with women and at least one child, two Persians offering booty, and a man lead-

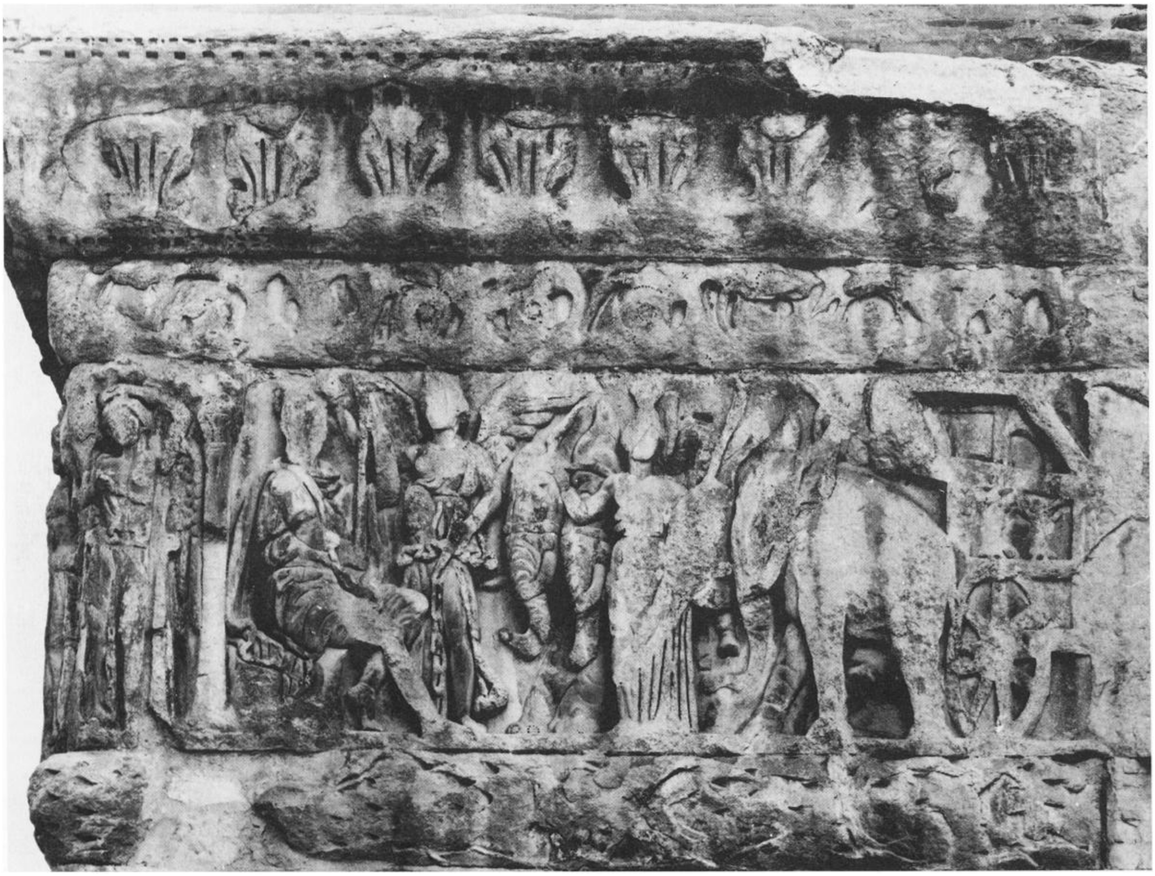

FIG. 25. *Victoria Orientis* (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

[36] The motif appears later on a Constantinian multiplum with the legend GLORIA ROMANORVM (M. Alföldi, *Die constantinische Goldprägung* [Mainz 1963] pl. 6, figs. 102a-b).

[37] The Ludovisi sarcophagus employs the same scheme, even to the dense packing of forms that press into the foreground (Hamberg [supra n. 32] pl. 44).

[38] For representative examples, see Brilliant (supra n. 20) 181-88.

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FIG. 26. *Virtus Augusti* (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

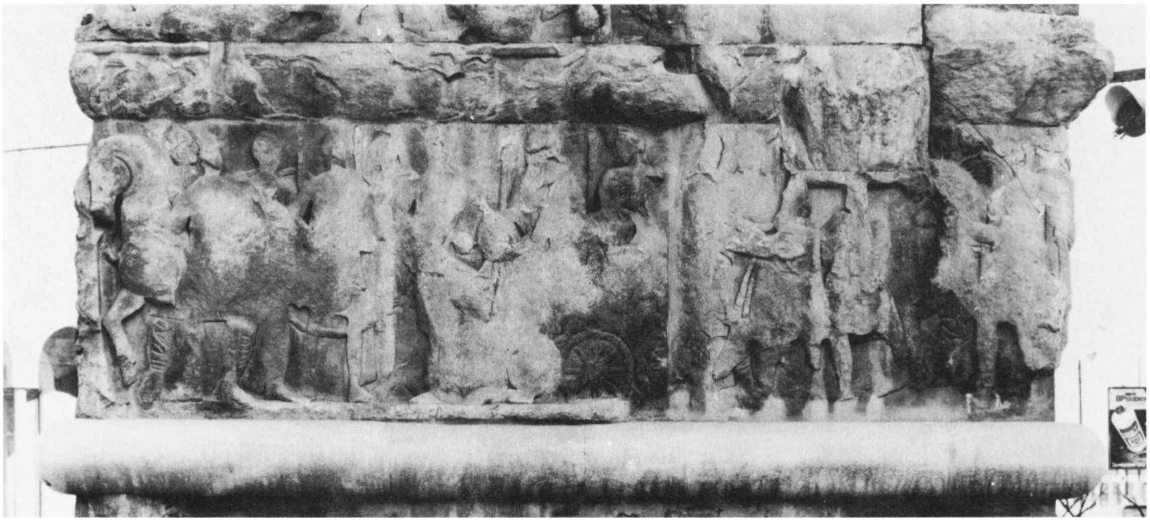

FIG. 27. *Pompa triumphalis* (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

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ing a horse. The scene has been variously interpreted as the capture of the Persian harem, the evacuation of newly-won territories, and as the entry of the harem into captivity in Antioch.[39] None of these identifications is satisfactory: the capture of the harem is depicted on the opposite pier; there is no procession of domestic animals comparable to those in the representations of barbarian emigration on the Columns of Marcus Aurelius and Arcadius; and all other place references on the reliefs are more elaborate than the vertical strip at the left edge, which has been taken to signify Antioch. A more plausible explanation of the iconography is that, like the two panels above, the relief employs familiar triumphal imagery. The scene adapts into panel format the *pompa triumphalis* which runs in narrow bands across the Arch of Trajan at Benevento and the Roman Arch of Septimius Severus.

26. Roma and Victorias (fig. 28). Enough remains to indicate that the panel showed an arcade filled at the center by Roma, who is seated with a globe and zodiacal circle, and at the sides by four alate females. Probably all of the figures duplicated the Victoria still visible, who carries a crown toward Roma and is accompanied by a cherub with a torch. In his analysis of the iconography, Laubscher demonstrated that all the components originate in Late Roman triumphal art, where related numismatic images carry such legends as TEMPORVM FELICITAS and SECVRITAS ROMAE.[40]

South pier, south face (*B.IV*).

27. Victorias holding a Vota Shield (fig. 29). The thoroughly conventional iconography consists of a central motif of Victorias holding a *clipeus* over an altar, flanking *tropaia*, and symmetrical figures of Mars and Virtus at the borders. Since the image probably refers to Galerius's *decennalia* in A.D. 303,[41] the panel is valuable evidence for dating the Arch of Galerius. The Arch may have been dedicated on the occasion of Diocletian's visit during his journey from Nicomedia to Rome in mid-year A.D. 303.[42]

28. Parade of Animals (fig. 30). All that survives is a striding female figure in classical costume, at the right edge of the panel, and a horse at the opposite end.

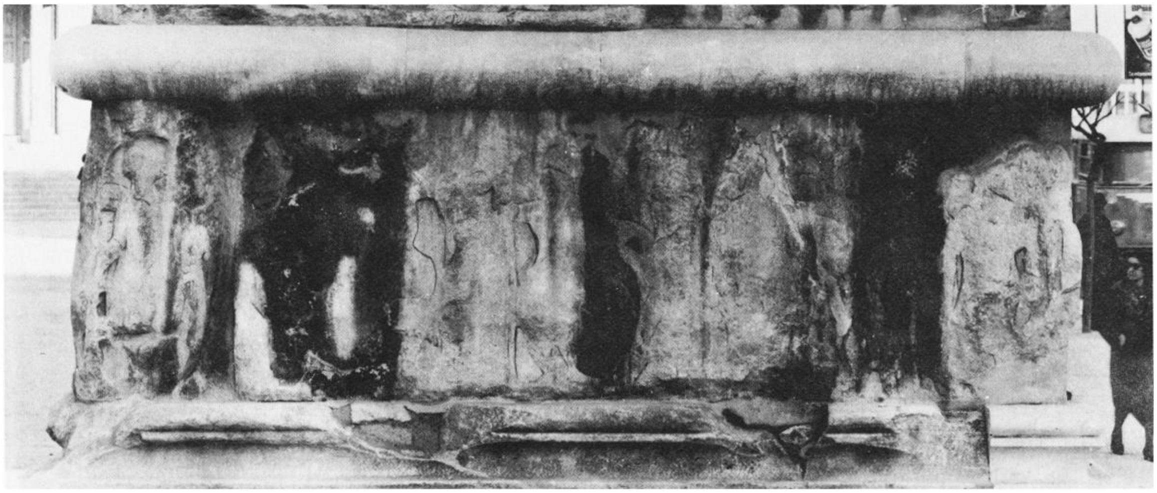

FIG. 28. Roma and Victorias (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

[39] Schönebeck (supra n. 5) 363f; Kinch (supra n. 2) 30f; Laubscher (supra n. 1) 84-86.

[40] Laubscher (supra n. 1) 86-88.

[41] A. Alföldi, "Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniells am römischen Kaiserhofe," *RömMitt* 49 (1934) 99, n. 8.

[42] C.H.V. Sutherland, *RIC* VI: *From Diocletian's Reform (A.D. 294) to the Death of Maximinus (A.D. 313)* (London 1967) 25.

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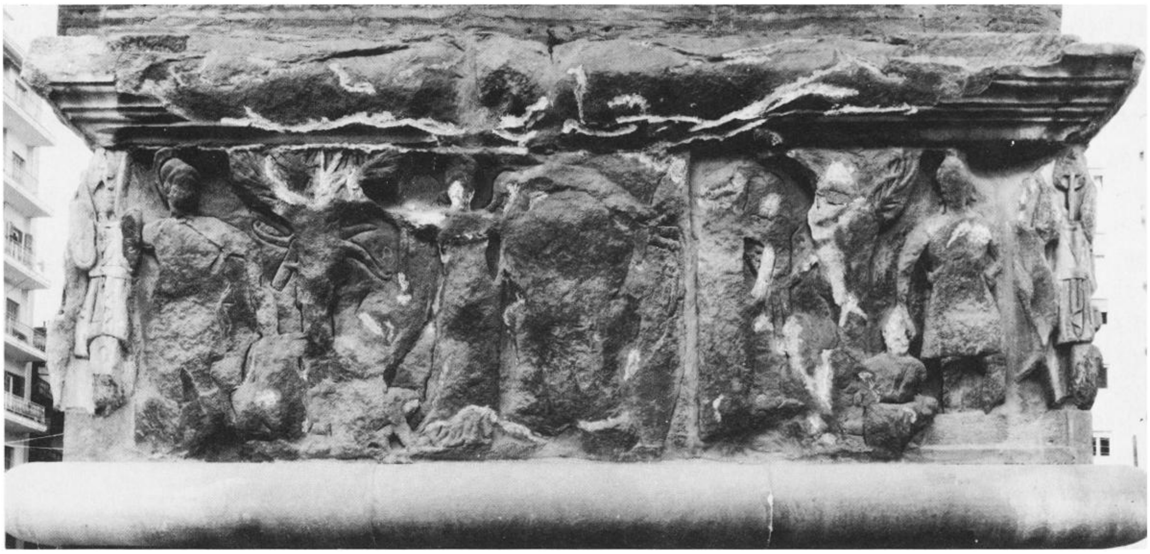

FIG. 29. Victorias holding a Vota Shield (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

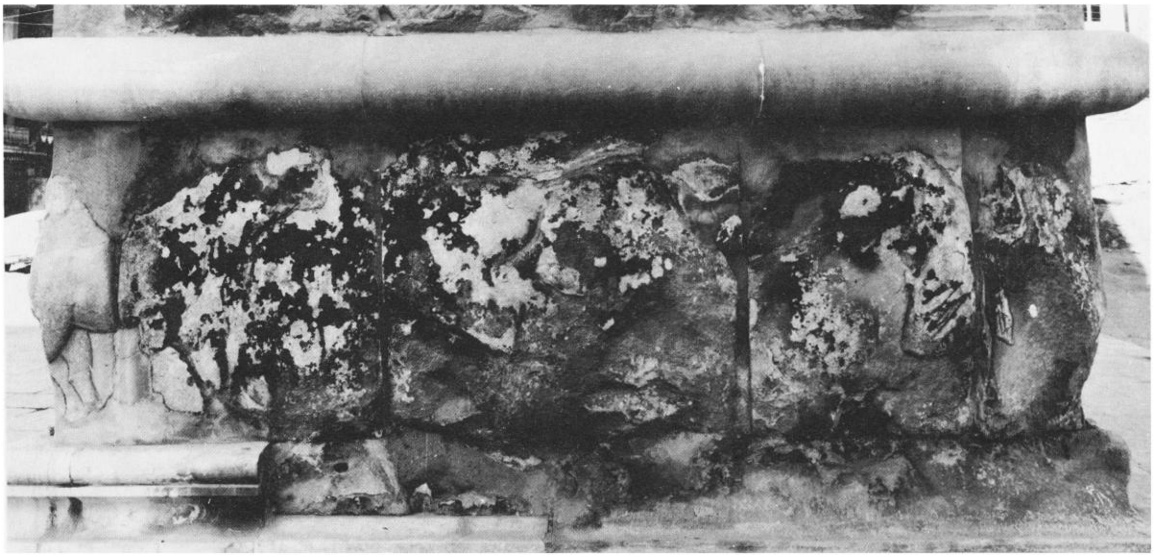

FIG. 30. Parade of Animals (?) (photo: Spiros Tsavdaroglou)

The iconographic richness of the Galerian program is apparent in the variety of subjects which have been described: documents of military history, events aggrandized through the addition of symbolic figures, abstract and hieratic images, and banal triumphal motifs. Such a wealth of imagery does not fit into any of the iconographic schemes which have been proposed. Schönebeck first recognized that all the reliefs record the Persian campaign and perceived a division between narrative ("annalistic") and ceremonial ("panegyrical") commemoration.[43] Basing his analysis on Schönebeck's discoveries, Laubscher proposed the following scheme: the narrative ran down the faces of AI, AII, then BI;

[43] Schönebeck (supra n. 5) 364f.

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images related to the narrative appeared on AIII; BII, BIII, and BIV contained a variety of triumphal images, with the focus on the upper three panels on BII; and all panels of the lowest level are like socles, with the exception of BII 18, which is the termination of the narrative.[44] However, the author does not provide an adequate explanation for the arrangement of the ceremonial scenes or for the apparent spill-over of the narrative from pier A to the adjacent pier.

Certainly it was Roman practice to present a course of events concurrently in factual and symbolic modes. Two examples are the Arch of Septimius Severus in Rome, which confines the battle chronicle to four large panels and employs symbolic triumphal imagery elsewhere,[45] and the Arch of Constantine, which limits the narrative to a narrow band encircling the monument and devotes most of the decorative scheme to symbolic allusions to the emperor.[46] Such a division on the Arch of Galerius, therefore, has both precedent and successor in the Roman triumphal arches. However, by the Late Roman era the distinction between narration and triumphal commemoration had faded. Since specific events in imperial history were interpreted as manifestations of the emperor's potency, their symbolic meaning rivalled their particularity. Thus to label individual panels on the Arch of Galerius either as unadorned history or as triumphal symbol imposes a rigid dichotomy which denies the full range of associations the images evoked: Galerius's victory over Narses was both an event in time and place and a foreordained revelation of the Tetrarch's invincibility. The scenes of the barbarian migration and the victor's clemency and of the imperial *adventus*, *adlocutio*, and sacrifice, for example, recall both particular occurrences and the rich historical and representational traditions of official ceremonies.[47]

Furthermore, if one accepts the factual-symbolic (or "annalistic"-"panegyrical") division in the Galerian program, it becomes apparent that several scenes are assigned to the wrong iconographic category. First, the Sacrifice of Galerius and Diocletian (BI 17) would be an intrusion into the chronicle of events. Since the arcaded setting and the attendants regularly appear in representations of imperial sacrifice, they need not specify a particular occurrence of the rite. Moreover, no other "narrative" panel so emphasizes the presence of deities and personifications. The divine witnesses provide a ceremonial statement of the *pietas* of the emperors, the divine approval of their reign, and the peace and harmony which the emperors confer upon the inhabited world. The *adventus* on the adjacent pier face (BII 19) is equally out of place as the first of the purely triumphal images. The panel must record a certain occasion; the impression of a real event is produced by the inclusion of a deity in its temple over the city, the individualized faces of Galerius's bodyguard, and the unusual emphasis on the welcoming crowd. In its concern with place and persons, the scene equals the presumably narrative panels of the *Adlocutio* and the Last Battle and should therefore be interpreted as an historical, not as a symbolic, image.

Also, the panels on the outer face of the north pier are not adequately explained by current interpretations of the iconographic program. Laubscher recognized that the scenes did not continue the narrative from the inner faces of the pier, as Schönebeck had thought, but he could only suggest that they were "directly related" to the narrative.[48] The final difficulty with his own scheme, which Laubscher overlooks, is the interpretation of the Cortege of Gift-bearing Persians (BI 18) as the last narrative episode. An offertory procession by the vanquished is a natural sequel to the Roman victory, but its position on the pier is abnormal. The chronicle did not extend to the lowest registers on the faces of Pier A; instead, the bottom panels bore images of animal parades. The Cortege should be interpreted as a variant on the common processional theme rather than as the final event of the narrative.

All of the problems raised by the various interpretations of the thematic organization disappear once we examine the panels according to their role as decoration on a triumphal arch, rather than as an isolated series of images. The panels' content is

44 Laubscher (supra n. 1) 103-106.

45 Brilliant (supra n. 24) Chaps. VI-XIV.

46 H.P. L'Orange and A. von Gerkan, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (Berlin 1939).

47 Ryberg's (supra n. 28) is an exemplary study of the wealth of associations which imperial iconography called forth.

48 Laubscher (supra n. 1) 103.

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determined by their location on the piers, just as it is on other triumphal monuments. This affinity with the sculptural programs of other arches is most evident in the bottom register of reliefs. The panels are simply adaptations to another format of the socle reliefs found on the Roman Arch of Septimius Severus and the Arch of Constantine and surviving from an Aurelian monument[49] and the so-called "Arcus Novus" from the Diocletianic era.[50] The socles, like the Galerian panels, depict Victorias and captive barbarians in low relief and orient the figures to coordinate with the topographic setting and ceremonial usage of the monuments. Thus the south face of the Arch of Constantine shows Victorias holding crowns and captives turning outward to greet the emperor as he first approaches from the south; the north facade, from which the emperor later emerges, includes Victorias inscribing vota shields and captives symmetrically arranged around them to symbolize the initiation of a new regnal era with the appearance of the emperor under the central arch.[51] On the Severan monument the figures are placed so as to suggest that they move to join a parade formation passing through the arch. The Roman soldiers and barbarians turn to move away from the wall of the Arch, then to converge at the central passage.[52]

The equivalent panels on the Arch of Galerius are dominated by processional scenes which lead in toward the domed crossing of the Arch or south toward the palace quarters. The scenes on the south pier are well enough preserved to indicate the cleverly organized increase in both tempo and concreteness of the imagery as the panels progress from the western facade, through the passageway for the main public road, and toward the palace. On the facade is the scene of Roma and Victorias (fig. 28), a static, symmetrical, and thoroughly abstract image. The panel is bound to the adjacent scene by the arcade which runs behind the row of five frontal figures and continues across the panel of Victorias in procession (fig. 24). Also, there is a development from Victorias offering crowns to Roma, to Victorias holding statuettes as they move in subdued progress toward the center of the Arch. The arched motif ends with the single archway at the right edge of the subsequent panel, the Cortege of Gift-bearing Persians (fig. 21), but the architectural backdrop then continues in the form of a colonnade. The Persian leaders clustered under the lone archway and the parade of figures who press forward, urged on by a Victoria at the far left, intensify the offertory movement initiated by the preceding panel of the Victorias. The fragments remaining from the fourth panel at this level (fig. 30) also indicate some kind of procession. The striding female at the right edge of the scene is a cousin of the Victoria who leads the Persian cortege, and the horse at the opposite end of the panel is a suitable counterpart to the row of Asiatic animals. By reversing the direction of movement in this fourth panel, the sculptors created the impression of parades entering through the main and lateral openings of the Arch and joining at the corner for the march toward the palace. The major sequence, the three well-preserved panels, goes from a static, conventional group of personifications to a row of slowly moving goddesses, to an excited parade of Persians such as those who may have brought gifts to Galerius in his throne room. The procession forever moves around the pier, providing sympathetic companionship to the Roman visitor as he approached the Tetrarch's palace. Even the use of an arcaded and colonnaded backdrop for the procession suggests the column-lined walkways by which the Roman entered the imperial precinct. The emotions of an offertory ceremony are increasingly fervent; and as the visitor moved from the scenes with symbolic imagery to the panel of the richly-laden Persian delegation he may have felt an equivalently heightened sense of excitement.

The little remaining on the lowest panels of the north pier depicts a similar procession toward the center of the Arch and southward. The only surviving block of the lowest panel on the east side shows a woman in a long chiton moving along swiftly with a horse (fig. 2); the urgent movement repeats the drive of the Persian procession. Kinch had identified the scene as a parade of captured animals, but said no more about it. He did describe the adjoining panel on the south face as three Ori-

[49] F. Cumont, "L'adoration des Mages et l'art triomphal de Rome," *MemPontAcc* 3 (1932) 81-105.

[50] H. Kähler, *Zwei Sockel eines Triumphbogens im Boboli Garten zu Florenz* (Berlin 1936).

[51] L'Orange and von Gerkan (supra n. 46) 131-33.

[52] Brilliant (supra n. 24) 155.

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ental men leading ungulates, and the trace of a hoof once visible in the left corner of the lowest panel on the west face suggests that the scene there was another parade of animals. A similar subject appears on the upper register of the north face (fig. 17), where Roman soldiers lead dromedaries into the center of the Arch.

All other panels on the Arch of Galerius are arranged to reflect its fundamentally tetrapyle character. The structure itself is characteristic of the Eastern tradition of triumphal arches, in which the monuments often rise over the intersection of colonnaded streets. Unlike the Roman single-span arches, which concentrate decoration upon the facades, the Eastern arches have the potential to direct the sculptural program inward, to be viewed by the person passing through the arch. The Arch of Septimius Severus at Lepcis Magna represents the Eastern type; at the attic level of the facades were symbolic scenes proclaiming the triumph, concord, and piety of the Severan dynasty, and on the interior each pier face bore three small panels, comprising numerous images of sacrifice and a trio of scenes depicting the siege of an Eastern city.[53]

Although the Arch of Galerius expands the panel decoration to cover even the outer faces of the piers, it retains the focus on the inner surfaces. The scenes on the western facade are commonplace images from Roman martial and triumphal art. They provide a banal commentary on the vivid battle history and assertions of Tetrarchic dogma visible from within the monument; they make slight claim on the attention or the imagination of the passersby.[54] On the north pier the upper two panels of the imperial *clementia* (fig. 4) may be intended to honor both Galerius and Diocletian, indicating their participation in the recent campaign, but the duplication and triteness of the iconography weaken the historical reference. The two middle panels on the south pier, with scenes of Galerius and his troops vanquishing the Persians and the Persian harem in a triumphal parade (fig. 7), at first glance appear to be more topical. However, the scenes are really visual slogans, adhering strictly to formulas used in earlier triumphal art. The *Victoria Orientis* in the panel above is an amalgam of triumphal motifs which symbolize an Eastern victory, and the surviving fragment of the third panel on the opposite pier, the Personifications of Persian Cities (fig. 4), also corresponds to the repertory of symbolic art.

The scenes are not arranged chronologically or conceptually, either on a single pier or across the facade. The customary left-to-right reading order would place the ceremony of imperial clemency before a battle; a descending sequence on the south pier would award Galerius triumphal honors before he conquered the enemy; and the most abstract scenes, the *Victoria Orientis* and the Personifications of Persian Cities, occupy different registers of the opposite piers. The sole organizational principle is to locate the more vivid triumphal themes on the south pier. Thus the *Victoria Orientis* and *Virtus Augusti* are placed across from the mirror images of *Clementia Augusti*, and the hieratic depiction of Roma and Victorias balances an apparently typical procession of captured animals.

The panels lining the side passages also employ stereotyped images, with the more meaningful content on the south pier. The relief with the row of dromedaries in the north passageway (fig. 17) is more decorative than significant, but the corresponding panel at the south, the Victorias holding a Vota Shield (fig. 29), perhaps commemorated both Galerius's *decennalia* and the dedication of the Arch.

When the visitor penetrated the Arch of Galerius, he finally encountered scenes with distinctive content. A narrative record of the Persian campaign and a collection of particularized, intensely meaningful ceremonial images fill the inner faces of the piers. The north pier documents the recent events chronologically, running down the east face and then continuing down the panels on the south face. The continuity is so marked that Schönebeck and later writers have assumed that the direction of development was followed on all

[53] R. Bartoccini, "L'Arco quadrifronte dei Severi a Lepcis (Leptis Magna)," *AfrIt* 4 (1931) 32-152. The iconography is discussed by P.W. Townsend, "The Significance of the Arch of the Severi at Lepcis," *AJA* 42 (1938) 512-24; J.B. Ward Perkins, "Severan Art and Architecture at Lepcis Magna," *JRS* 38 (1949) 59-80; and M. Strocka, "Beobachtungen an den Attikareliefs des Severischen Quadrifrons von Lepcis Magna," *Antiquités africaines* 6 (1972) 147-72.

[54] The colonnaded walkways attached to the lateral arches even infringed upon the reliefs, curtailing the upper panels and cutting down into the third register near the outer borders. In contrast, all other surviving panels are inviolate.

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other pier faces as well. Even in its grievously worn condition the trio of battle scenes on the east face clearly summarizes major episodes in the campaign (fig. 2). Though the dominant impression is of a report from the Eastern arena, the Roman observers would appreciate the chronicle as symbolic proof of Galerius's invincibility as well.[55] The narrative proceeds from the top scene with the Roman cavalry charge to the capture of the harem and a subsequent foray across the Tigris. Since the bottom panel is treated as a socle relief, the next episode of the narrative is placed in the uppermost panel of the pier's south face (fig. 3). The image of the Last Battle both terminates the narrative of events on the battlefield and initiates the account of the aftermath of war by including the image of a personification driving in the triumphal wagon. As the sequel to the Persian defeat come the episodes of barbarian migration and submission and the imperial *adventus* into freed territory.

The organization of the panels on the south pier has eluded such a satisfactory interpretation. However, the difficulty signals the novelty of the governing principles, rather than their absence. Schönebeck believed that the reliefs on the east face continued the narrative, whereas all other panels were a patternless arrangement of triumphal images. A more recent interpretation, accepted by Laubscher, found a system in the triumphal scenes by isolating the panels with the *Adventus*, Combat between Galerius and Narses, and Emperors Enthroned (fig. 6) as a triad proclaiming the Tetrarch's god-like character, triumph, and majesty.[56] However, there is no reason to accept the *Adventus* as a triumphal image, when it conveys the same air of actuality as the presumably documentary *Adlocutio*.

The organizational principles become apparent once we notice the visual clues on the panels and reconsider the nature of the iconography. First, observation of the Galerian reliefs reveals that only on the east and north faces of the south pier are panels above the socle level bound together horizontally, by means of echoing motifs and a shared sculptural style. The resemblance is not an artifact of the workshop procedure alone; the scaffolding may have allowed the sculptors to work simultaneously on the panels in the same register, but such a mechanical explanation does not cover both the presence of similarities on these pier faces and the equally obvious absence of them everywhere else. Since a viewer could not study the two pier faces together, he might not have perceived the horizontal ties. However, the existence of such pairing is purposeful, and it suggests the fundamentally similar content of panels at the same level.

The inner faces of the south pier bear paired panels which are organized into a sequence which progresses from records of specific ceremonies in the uppermost scenes, to glorifying recapitulations of the victory over the Persians below, then to wholly abstract images proclaiming the dogma of the Tetrarchic government. The panels glorify the Tetrarchs as the possessors of the major imperial virtues, *clementia*, *concordia*, and, most importantly, *virtus* and *pietas*.[57] Whereas the descending reading order on the north pier is a simple chronological recounting of Galerius's recent expedition, the descending order on the south pier is based on a morphology of ceremonial iconography. One pier depicts events according to their temporal relationships; the other arranges images of imperial iconography according to their rank in a hierarchy of abstraction. Despite the horizontal cohesion on the inner faces of the south pier, however, both piers treat the pier face as an independent reading unit. The two faces of the south pier merely repeat the same static hierarchy, rather than continuing an unbroken narrative from one pier face to the next.[58]

[55] I. Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs of Marcus Aurelius* (New York 1967) 91f and Hamberg (supra n. 32) 42f.

[56] Brilliant (supra n. 6) 78.

[57] Ryberg (supra n. 55) 91; C.C. Vermeule, *The Goddess Roma in the Art of the Roman Empire* (London 1959) 11.

[58] The thematic organization of the Galerian program has a precedent in the relief cycle on the Arch of Trajan at Benevento, which has been analyzed convincingly by K. Fittschen ("Das Bildprogramm des Trajansbogens zu Benevent," *AA* 4 [1972] 742-88). There themes are arranged sequentially and meaningfully on each face and related at each level on both country and town facades; the ascending reading order moves from images of Trajan's dealings with men to his relationship to the gods. Another parallel to the Galerian program is the emphasis given to scenes depicting the emperor's *pietas erga deos* and *pietas erga patriam*: at Benevento the scenes are brought closest to the observer by being placed in the passageway, whereas on the Arch of Galerius the scenes of imperial *pietas* (the reliefs of the Sacrifice and the Emperors Enthroned) fill a register nearer the observer on the pier closer to the palace. Such affinities between the two programs suggest that the Galerian planners turned back particularly to Trajanic art

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A pair-by-pair analysis of the reliefs on the south pier clarifies the scheme. The panels of the *Adlocutio* and *Adventus* (figs. 18 and 22) include identical images of Victoria-Felicitas in their contiguous borders, and they depict lively, homely figures more or less in scale with their environment in a representational style found nowhere else on the south pier.[59] Both the *adlocutio* and *adventus* ceremonies affirmed the emperor's role vis-à-vis his subjects; both were favored rituals, frequently used in numismatic art; and both introduced the ideas of martial victory[60] and imperial epiphany. The scenes balance symbolic and documentary significance by stressing the ritual core through an exaggeration of the central figure of Galerius, but yet alluding to specific events through the inclusion of descriptive detail. The panels on the second register, Galerius's Reception of a Persian Delegation and the Combat between Galerius and Narses (figs. 19 and 23), are related visually and iconographically to each other and not to the reliefs above. Both scenes are crowded with figures, and they use the motif of mourning barbarians in adjacent corners. More importantly, the two are free interpretations of Galerius's victory over Narses. To heroize Galerius, they depict historical personages as participants in fictitious events. The presence of Roma as Galerius's counterpart ennobles the representation of the Tetrarch's receiving the Persian delegation, and the hand-to-hand combat between Galerius and Narses revises history by granting the Tetrarch a personal victory. Recent events are subsumed by the thoroughly abstract assertions of the Tetrarchs' divinity and sovereignty in the panels of the third register.[61] The Sacrifice by Galerius and Diocletian and the Emperors Enthroned (figs. 20 and 24) are frontal, perfectly symmetrical compositions whose formality is underscored by the rows of figures spanning the background. In both scenes the figures are deities and personifications, and in both they embody the divine approval of the divinized rulers. The parallelism in iconographic content is even more extensive, for they are the ultimate statements of the *pietas* and *concordia* of the Tetrarchs.

In summary, the preceding examination of the panels of the Arch of Galerius has unearthed four different patterns in the arrangement of the scenes. The lower border of panels is filled with processional scenes that direct the observer from the entrances to the central opening of the Arch and from the interior to Galerius's palace at the south. The banal official iconography which covers the western facade and lines the minor archways introduces the theme of a military victory in the Orient, and it first focusses the viewer's attention on the pier adjacent to the imperial palace. The distinctive iconographic content is concentrated on the interior of the Arch. A narrative record of the Persian campaign and a collection of particularized, intensely meaningful ceremonial images sheathe the inner faces of the piers.[62] The north pier relates the recent events chronologically, and the south pier interprets the campaign by leading the viewer from an awareness of the historical facts to an appreciation of the absolute validity of the Tetrarchic form of government, symbolized by the Roman victory.

The iconographic program of the lost eastern piers may have mirrored the scheme of the preserved segment of the Arch of Galerius.[63] If so,

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for inspiration. We know that Galerius especially admired Trajan (see G. Dontas, "Collection Paul Canellopoulos, IX: Portrait de Galère," *BCH* 99 [1975] 521-33).

59 The Victoria-Felicitas motif is repeated at the border of the panel of the *Victoria Orientis* on the facade (fig. 25). However, the paratactic assembly of large figures who represent abstract ideas destroys the continuity from the other panels at the upper level.

60 Brilliant (supra n. 20) 165-70, 173-77.

61 Originally the panel of the Emperors Enthroned showed the figure of a Persian crouching at the feet of Galerius; only that motif made a specific allusion to the victory over Narses. See Pond Rothman (supra n. 33) 22f.

62 The treatment of the Arch of Galerius as space enclosed by ornamented walls, rather than as a monumental facade, supports Mango's hypotheses about the form and decoration of the Chalkê in Constantinople. Justinian's Chalkê was a rectangular building, roofed by a central dome and flanking vaults, and its dome was ornamented with mosaics commemorating the victories won for Justinian by Belisarius. The affinities with the Galerian monument are obvious. Mango suggested that the earlier Chalkê built on the site for Constantine resembled the vestibule attached to the Arch of Galerius (C. Mango, *The Brazen House* [Copenhagen 1959] 21-35).

63 Once the iconography on both remaining piers is accepted as a commemoration of the Persian campaign, the narrative depiction of yet two other expeditions on the lost piers is improbable. However, the existence of a relief fragment from one of the lost piers, which depicts a barbarian who is not a Persian (Laubscher [supra n. 1] pl. 68,1), indicates that the program was based on the military history of the Tetrarchy. Possibilities are another of Galerius's campaigns, the exploits of Diocletian, or events in the western territories of the empire (see Laubscher [supra n. 1] 105f).

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the visitor was led from the facades into the heart of the monument and then directed toward the palace. Once within the Arch, he could not stand at a sufficient distance from contiguous piers to survey any two in a single glance. Moreover, he would not be able to read the panels in the conventional left-to-right order; viewers entering from the four cardinal points, from either the public or palace road, would have conflicting expectations about where the series should begin.[64] But the fundamental purpose of the iconography was not to record history, but to reveal history's essential meaning. Therefore a chronological development from one scene to the next is not a paramount concern. Instead, the panels reminded the observer of his position in a world dominated by the Tetrarchs.

For the person standing within the Arch it was literally true that the emperor was *semper et ubique victor*.[65] The magnetic force of the ruler's presence, the universal homage he claimed as his right, are as omnipresent in the scenes on the Arch of Galerius as the insistence that he is ever-victorious. The Tetrarch is the source of every action and reaction; towering over his army and the gods, he is the psychological and physical focus of every panel. Galerius is invincible; the Persian army flees in confusion when he approaches; he is invulnerable when he meets Narses in combat; he receives the honor of the *victoria orientis*; and he is repeatedly accompanied by a Victoria. Galerius possesses all the virtues which the rulers of the Late Roman Empire assumed; he is so pious that the gods witness his performance of a sacrifice, he is so forgiving that he grants audience to the Persian delegation, and he is so benevolent that he restores the newly-regained provinces. The Tetrarch is greeted as if his appearance were a revelation of divinity, and he and his co-rulers are acknowledged to be worthy to govern the empire wisely through all time.

As the Roman visitor turned from a study of the proof of Galerius's invincibility on the north pier to view the doctrinal assertion of all his transcendant virtues on the south pier, he was moving closer to the awesome presence of the Tetrarch in the palace just beyond. It is as if the linear progression from the palace, to the palace vestibule, to the triumphal arch, with first its expression of imperial virtues on the south pier and then its battle narrative on the north pier, were the physical manifestation of the numen of Galerius himself, radiating from his corporeal being, through his abiding virtues of *clementia, concordia, virtus*, and *pietas*, to his action in history, the recent Persian campaign.

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[64] Schönebeck's discussion ([supra n. 5] 368) about the possible sequences from pier to pier too clearly manifests the impossibility of reconstructing a single continuous development.

[65] G.Ch. Picard, *Les trophées romains* (*BEFAR* 187; Paris 1957) 466.

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